



Bridgewater Review

Volume 25 | Issue 2

Article 12

Dec-2006

Poems

John Mulrooney

Bridgewater State College, john.mulrooney@bridgew.edu

Recommended Citation

Mulrooney, John (2006). Poems. *Bridgewater Review*, 25(2), 26-27.

Available at: http://vc.bridgew.edu/br_rev/vol25/iss2/12

This item is available as part of Virtual Commons, the open-access institutional repository of Bridgewater State University, Bridgewater, Massachusetts.

Poems

John Mulrooney



We
Live
as
We
Dream

Baton tap
on I beam,
first lightly
like vesper bells
then heavy
empty clamor
that still fails
to wake the man
curled asleep
around the base;
impaled looking,
clutching
a rivet sleepily,
like a lover
who reaches
for the other
in the night,
seeking to
not quite disappear
into them,
holding on:
dreaming of elsewhere
and touching something real.
Cop thrusts nightstick.
The man gives blunt caress
to the vibrating surface
and says "Catfish",
last word from another place
and his eyelids lift like
the yellow flags
of a conquering country.
"C'mon buddy,
you gonna stay there all night?"
hands fold together
mouth opened
pushed breath,
first word,
almost silent
"No".

Sibling

At 5:41 the time is announced
and the woman sitting next to me sets her watch.
And then moves it ahead five minutes
the way I sometimes do to compensate for lateness.
My hands hold themselves, folded in a church and steeple.
Tugging at my thumb nail,
I dismantle myself absently,
and then more absently,
torn fibers hanging sudden in the air.
At home before the cold flat witness in the bathroom
I send the hairs on my face to the blade
for the crime of making me itch. Hair, skin, fall away,
always come back looking like me;
this rumpled sheet in the mirror,
a fresh crow's foot lurking around the eyes.
What might you have looked like
stillborn brother before me,
whom my mother never spoke of
whom the doctor's could not explain?
People tell me I take after our father,
that I look like our brother,
that I look like our sister,
(buy they never say our brother looks like our sister).
Are you looking at me now while the tax collector's
tiny eyes pierce my flesh? As I turn electric
cards over with hollow digital clicks
and thicken the day with phone calls
dodging creditors with ox-tongued utterances?
Would you accuse me if you could speak?
Would I wince at a sound like my own voice
shouting a litany of my failures?
Were you robbed of a body? A place to be?
An ancestry of salt and bronze?
Are you watching me from the blinding formlessness
hating me for the time I waste?
Or were you guided, as I am, by hesitation?
Did you see the faces in mirrors
at the end of day pleading with light
to be kind to a shape that only keeps
light within, stores it for a certain time?
Did you see before birth what I only begin to glimpse now,
how we make of ourselves a thing rooted.
And like a tree that is planted by the water
how we wish we could be moved.

—John Mulrooney is Assistant Professor of English.